Transportation and Public Works

Business Plan
2003-2004

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Message from the Minister and Deputy Minister

It is our pleasure to submit the 2003-04 Business Plan on behalf of the Department of Transportation and Public Works.

The Department of Transportation and Public Works has a broad mandate that serves the public and supports other provincial government departments and agencies in the delivery of programs and services. The Department's responsibilities include the construction, maintenance and operation of provincial roads, bridges and ferries, the planning and management of highway and building infrastructure, and the provision of government support services including accommodation and property services and government procurement and supply processes.

The Department has many important initiatives planned for 2003-04, including significant investments in the field of highway and bridge infrastructure. Some of these investments include the introduction of a multi-year steel truss bridge replacement program, as well as the completion of a new Margaree Harbour Bridge and the final phase of renovations to Seal Island Bridge.

The Department is also busy in the design and management of capital construction projects for the Province, including school renovation and construction programs. In this fiscal year, staff will complete construction on high schools in Brookfield and Pictou East and West, as well as finish renovations to Sir John A. MacDonald High School. These are important projects, but represent only a small number of government construction projects designed and managed by staff.

Transportation and Public Works is also responsible for government's current and future Data Centre needs for the storage and management of electronic information. Staff will explore ways to provide Data Centre services for government - currently valued at several million dollars - that are cost-effective and that meet the needs of our clients.

Our department remains committed to cost-effective operations, as well as the exploration of new ideas and ways of doing business. Consequently, new technologies will continue to be introduced, and the ones already in use will be expanded. The public will see the benefit of these intelligent technologies - such as Road Weather Information Systems and pre-wetting of salt - through improved snow and ice control and reduction in salt use. We will also continue detailed design work for new highways and bridges, and initiate an E-procurement Action Plan, which will reduce government's costs and improve service for the private sector.

Another important issue facing the Department, and the entire civil service, is an aging workforce. A long-term plan to replace skilled workers is needed, as well as methods to retain employees. A Strategic Learning Framework, underway in the Department, will provide an overall vision and program to retain staff and skill sets needed in the 21st Century.

As we plan for the coming year, we would like to acknowledge the ongoing hard work and dedication of departmental employees. Transportation and Public Works Staff are professional and ready to serve the public, an attitude appreciated by Nova Scotians across the province.

Michael G. Baker, Q.C., Minister

Brian Stonehouse, Deputy Minister

Mission

Construct, maintain and manage provincial highways, buildings and related infrastructure, and provide accommodation, property, procurement and corporate information technology and communications services to support sustainable economic growth and social well-being.

Transportation and Public Works is an infrastructure department that:

- provides services - direct or procured – to Nova Scotians and other government departments,
- focuses on our clients
- commits to safety, cost-effectiveness, and quality.

Planning Context

The Department of Transportation and Public Works has a diverse mandate, with clients including the public and other provincial government departments and agencies.

Our core businesses are managed and delivered by our Highway Operations, Public Works and Government Services Divisions. Their responsibilities include the construction, maintenance and operation of provincial roads, bridges and ferries, the planning and management of highway and building infrastructure and the provision of government support services, such as accommodation and property services and government procurement and supply processes. Activities undertaken by the Department in support of programs and services in these areas are critical in contributing to Government's priorities for the province.

Wherever you go in Nova Scotia, you'll see obvious signs that transportation and public infrastructure are vital to our economy. Whether it's a highway, bridge, railway track, airport or ferry terminal – each element contributes to the larger goals we share as a province. The buildings we help construct and maintain house the operations of government, support education throughout Nova Scotia, and enhance our ongoing efforts to promote tourism and culture.

In a changing environment, and a changing world, the Department of Transportation and Public Works continues to monitor regional, national and international issues that can affect the economic and social interests of Nova Scotians.

We continue to identify trends that are likely to affect our work in the coming year:

1. Aging infrastructure
2. Availability of funding for highway construction and maintenance
3. Federal transportation strategy

4. Meeting customers' needs with information technology
5. Availability of skilled human resources
6. Environmental concerns
7. Managing public expectations

Aging Infrastructure
Pavement doesn't last forever. The average age of pavement across Canada is 14 years. In Nova Scotia, the average is 21 years. Some roads are even older. As a consequence of deferred maintenance, the cost of repaving old roads has gone up considerably - from $120,000 to $200,000 per kilometer.

On the building side, Transportation and Public Works manages the capital maintenance of over 1,000 government-owned buildings. Many of these facilities are more than 40 years old and need significant repairs. And as our population grows older, we'll be required to provide even greater accessibility for people who are disabled due to age or illness. Funding for the increasing volume of maintenance required will be a continuing challenge.

Funding for Highway Construction and Maintenance
Nova Scotia's roads and bridges need about $3.4 billion in capital construction work over the next 10 years. This infrastructure deficit is a result of years of declining budgets. Capital spending has increased in recent years. However, the deficit is large, and will remain that way in the near future.

We will continue to push the federal government to join us in providing a long-term highway funding agreement. As a department, we recognize that we are competing with other provincial departments for the same taxpayer dollars – money that's also needed for new schools, doctors' salaries and social support programs. While we continue to seek maximum provincial funding to address this shortfall, we will also continue to demand that the federal government reinvest a larger share of its fuel tax revenues in our public highway system.

Federal Transportation Strategy
Transportation planning, done properly, takes time. It also takes collaboration and partnerships with other government agencies and the private sector.

The federal government has released, in 2003, a document entitled "Straight Ahead - A Vision for Transportation in Canada". The implementation of this strategy will provide an opportunity to influence federal policy in our region. We will continue to represent Nova Scotia interests. In particular, we are stressing the need for fair and affordable access to air, rail and marine transportation routes. Forty per cent of our trade goes to export markets, so reliable access is critical.

Meeting Customers' Needs With Information Technology
How can we use technology to better serve our clients? From electronic procurement to

accommodation services to road weather information systems to environmental management - our decision-makers are asked to make significant policy and operational judgments in a rapidly changing global environment. As we continue to develop relationships with clients, suppliers and partners, it will be essential that our communications, and supporting technologies, be as seamless and as efficient as possible. Our Procurement Division, for example, has made great strides in developing and delivering high-quality services that support government policies and programs.

Availability of Skilled Human Resources

As the Department strives to meet its mission and goals, we face the challenge of maintaining a professional and highly skilled workforce. Due to years of hiring freezes, early retirement opportunities, budgetary impacts that depleted our employment resources and an aging workforce, Transportation and Public Works has reached a critical stage in its employment cycles. Approximately 300 employees are eligible to retire in 2003, and an additional 500 by 2008. The Department is faced with the challenge of recruiting skilled workers such as engineers in a highly competitive market. The loss of corporate knowledge is also an important issue facing the Department.

Without a solid plan to meet these human resource challenges, it will be difficult for the Department to maintain and construct safe and efficient highways and buildings. Maintaining our technological infrastructure and offering progressive procurement, property management, financial, human resource and policy development expertise are also critical to our success.

To tackle this issue, the Department of Transportation and Public Works has undertaken a comprehensive internal plan called Strategic Learning Framework. This plan will provide learning and development opportunities for our existing employees and raise the Department's profile with all other prospective skilled workers. The plan's objective is to facilitate the development of knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviors that will help the Department meet its current and future operational requirements and business goals. Part of this plan will include educational opportunities for staff, employment opportunities for youth, and a plan to train replacements for senior managers.

Environmental Concerns

In recent years, more public attention has focused on issues around air and water quality. As the provincial department responsible for cleaning up contaminated sites, we expect to face continual budget pressures as new needs are identified.

The Department of Transportation and Public Works has also developed an Environmental Management System. This system provides a framework for ensuring that all employees of the Department do their jobs in a more environmentally friendly manner. The system is continuously updated to address new environmental issues as they arise.

Managing Public Expectations

Nova Scotians drive on our roads and highways and visit our buildings and other facilities seven days a week, 52 weeks a year. They have a right to expect that their tax dollars are used to ensure the roads and buildings are safe and also contribute to effective public service. To provide that level of service, we will continue to pay close attention to the results of customer satisfaction surveys and again work closely with other government agencies and stakeholders in the private sector as we pursue the goals and objectives set out in this year's business plan.

In summary, the transportation sector faces many challenges, as do the programs and services provided by Transportation and Public Works that support government program delivery by other departments. The issues will require a strategic and thoughtful approach, to ensure the economic and social policy goals of the Province of Nova Scotia.

Strategic Goals

The following goals support the corporate priorities of this government. A safe and effective transportation system plays a critical role in supporting the government's efforts to maximize employment and economic growth. Building infrastructure and provincial real property assets that are effectively and efficiently managed, and government services that meet the needs of client departments and agencies, are essential in supporting the strategic delivery of government programs and services.

1) Enhance the value and safety of the transportation system.

2) Manage provincial real property, effectively and efficiently, for government's best strategic advantage.

3) Provide the infrastructure and related policies necessary to support economic growth of the province.

4) Provide efficient, cost-effective and environmentally sound government services to address customers' needs.

Core Business Areas

The Department has three operational areas: Highway Operations, Public Works and Government Services. Supporting sections include Policy and Planning, Public Affairs and Communications, Human Resources, Financial Services and Information Technology.

The Department's core businesses can be summarized as follows:

1. **Highway Operations**
   Construction, maintenance, and operation of provincial roads, bridges, and ferries.

   Programs and services in this core business area are designed to ensure efficient and effective construction and maintenance of the provincial highway system along with its safe operation, thereby contributing to economic well-being within the province.

2. **Public Works**

Planning and management of highway and building infrastructure, including:

- highway, bridge and building design services,
- project management services for government construction projects,
- environmental services,
- administration of provincial industrial water utilities

Under this core business area, programs and services have been established to support the departmental goals of providing a safe transportation system and provincial infrastructure to contribute to economic growth and sound environmental services to meet customers' needs.

3. **Government Services**

Provision of support services to provincial government departments and agencies, including:

- accommodation and property services;
- government procurement and supply processes;
- stationery stockroom;
- postal services;
- the delivery of telecommunications and information technology to meet the corporate business needs of government;
- public safety field communications services, including Trunked Mobile and legacy radio services;
- administration of industrial parks and malls

Programs and services under this core business area have been designed to provide high quality services that support other government departments and agencies in the delivery of their programs to Nova Scotians.

In addition to functions related to the provincial highway system, the Department is responsible for the development and implementation of policies relating to air, marine, rail and road transport systems, including the administration of the safe operation of provincially regulated railways.

Priorities for 2003-2004

Core Business #1
Highway Operations

- Provide cost-effective maintenance services for provincial roads, bridges, and ferries and provide snow and ice control on provincial highways so that public satisfaction levels and condition ratings are maintained. This is to be accomplished through the use of an appropriate mix of in-house and contracted private sector services. The benchmarks to be used for the physical condition of the infrastructure are: International Roughness Index for 100 series highways (2002 value - 1.48) and the provincial condition survey, all roads (2002 value - F) while public satisfaction levels are to be measured by the Department's annual customer satisfaction survey - overall satisfaction of 50% in 2002).

- Continue to adjust the provincial salting program and complete the province's salt management plan to address concerns raised by the Federal Government's review of the use of road salts and their effect on the environment. Actions to include: continued construction of new storage facilities to increase storage capacity by an additional 10%; expand the use of Road Weather Information Systems by upgrading 5 older sites in Kings County and completing the Highway 104 system between Antigonish and Sydney; and increase the number of department units equipped to prewet salt and sand / salt mixtures by 50%.

- Begin a steel truss bridge replacement program with a goal of replacing or upgrading the 65 highest priority steel truss bridges over the next five years. Program goals in 2003/2004 are: to put in place sufficient engineering design resources; develop different "prefabricated design types"; and build four to six structures to evaluate the different design types.

- Complete and open the current phase of Highway 101 from Mt Uniacke to Ellershouse, and commence construction on Highway 125, as part of the federal cost-shared agreement signed in 2001. Initiate subgrade construction on the section of Highway 103 announced in fiscal 02/03 - Beechville to Tantallon and continue work on the Highway 103 Barrington bypass.

- Complete the Seal Island bridge deck replacement project and the Margaree Harbour bridge.

- Continue the ferry fleet renewal program. Complete construction of the replacement for the Joshua Slocum ferry and finalize a replacement priority list and schedule for the remaining ferries.

Core Business #2
Public Works

- Provide design and construction management services, under the school renovation and construction program, for a variety of projects. These projects will include:
  Renovation - Phase II renovation of Sir John A. Macdonald High School
  Construction - South Colchester High School, Windsor High School, Pictou East and Pictou West High Schools (Completion 2003); Sydney Elementary, Shelburne High School and Truro Junior High School (Completion 2004-05).

- Complete design, planning, and obtain environmental approvals for expansion and upgrades to the province's 100 series highway system. In particular, pre-engineering and environmental work will continue on Highway 101 from St. Croix to Avonport, and Highway 104 from New Glasgow to Sutherlands River. This pre-engineering and environmental work is planned to be completed in 2004.

- Implement a bridge management program for the province and begin loading data collected in previous years, with a goal of 67% of provincial bridges inspected and loaded into the new system by March 2004.

- Evaluate a Geographic Information System (GIS) pilot project conducted with the SNSMR Nova Scotia Geomatics Centre. This pilot project created a geographic reference system for Cumberland County. This system could be used to support bridge management and other information systems implemented by the department in the future.

- Continue to pursue four of the Department's obligations, with respect to buildings, as outlined in Nova Scotia's Energy Strategy Implementation Plan. These obligations are: lead by example with a government house-in-order program that has targets for energy use in existing provincially funded buildings; the Provincial government will implement a plan for early conversion of provincially funded buildings to natural gas where it is economically feasible to do so; begin to phase in energy efficiency standards for commercial heating, ventilating, and air conditioning equipment in provincially funded buildings; and develop and maintain an inventory of energy use for all provincially funded facilities.

Core Business #3
Government Services

- Investigate, with other levels of government, opportunities for the development of provincially owned property.

- In partnership with the Office of Economic Development, continue supplier development programs and Nova Scotia Business Opportunities Initiatives (NSBOI) to improve the flow of information of all public sector, federal, provincial, and MA SH buying opportunities to Nova Scotia companies (e.g. distribution of new Procurement Brancn Tenders Brochure). In addition, promote the expanded value and use of e-commerce in public procurement.

- Develop an electronic procurement (e-procurement) action plan, for the prioritization and implementation of e-procurement projects considered essential and critical to the procurement function within government as well as for the MASH (municipalities, agencies, schools and hospitals) sector.

- Determine the government's current and future Data Centre needs for the storage and management of electronic information, and develop a Request for Proposals for those requirements. Processing and data for significant Provincial systems reside at the Data Centre, such as the Human Resources Management System, Registry of Motor Vehicles, and the Provincial Assessment System. In addition, the Data Centre hosts other applications for government departments including SAP and the Health Information System.

- Develop a long-term strategy for the future of provincial mobile radio infrastructure. The strategy will determine the most appropriate system for the use of this infrastructure in public safety services in the future.

Priorities in the Area of Transportation Policy

- Provide Nova Scotia's input into major federal legislative and policy reviews affecting all modes of transportation.

- Work, through the Council of Atlantic Premiers, on regional co-operative initiatives to harmonize measures affecting movement of freight by truck and to improve air service to, from, and within the Atlantic provinces.

Budget Context - Operating Budget

Transportation and Public Works - Estimated Budget Expenditures		
	Forecast 2002\03 (Per 2003\04 Estimates Book)	Budget 2003\04 (Per 2003\04 Estimates Book)
	$Thousands	$Thousands
Total Program Expenses - Gross Current	290,249	291,666
Net Program Expenses - Net of Recoveries	249,727	246,654
Salaries and Benefits	$90,613	96,241
Funded Staff (FTEs)*	1,982	** 2079

* The FTE numbers shown are funded through both the operating and capital budget.

** The net FTE increase reflects additional staff resulting from transfers and resources required to support the expanded capital program, which includes the Steel Truss Bridge Replacement Program and the Canadian Strategic Infrastructure Fund.